A NEW SPECIES OF DECUSSOCARPUS DE LAUB. (PODOCARPACEAE) FROM BRAZIL

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In August 1976 an unidentified species of Decussocarpus De Laub. was collected by N.A. Rosa and J.M. Pires of the Museu Paraense "Emilío Goeldi" in Belém, Pará, Brazil. A specimen from this collection was then deposited in the Smithsonian (US).

Dr. Pires had concluded this specimen might represent a new species, but needed confirmation. In due course of this pursuit, Dr. Wurdack (US) sent this specimen on loan to Dr. David J. DeLaubenfels of Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

DeLaubenfels (1969) had already revised the nomenclature of several South American Podocarpaceae taxa. In this paper he designated some new generic names on key distinctions in leaf anatomy and cone morphology.

In March 1977 Dr. DeLaubenfels had sent a letter to Dr. Pires indicating that his determinations of this specimen as a new distinct species were correct. However, this species has not been published since then and no further information was obtained from Dr. Pires.

In an attempt to clarify the situation, a latin diagnosis and type specimen are designated here as Decussocarpus piresii Silba, in honour of Dr. Pires.

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DECUSSOCARPUS PIRESII Silba, species nova.

Arbor ad 30 m. alta. Folia aequaliter dispositis, acuta, 9.5-11 mm. longa, 2-3 mm. lata, viridia-glaucis. Strobili feminei ovata, 2 cm. longis, 0.8-1.2 cm. latis, brunneo-rubescens.

Type: Brazil, Território de Rondonia, Serra Pacas Novos, Seringal S. Luiz, 50 km. east of Rio Pacas Novos, 14 Aug. 1976, Rosa & Pires 586 (111294), female (US- Holotype).

Tree to 30 m. tall with a trunk to 2.5 m. in circumference. Primary branches appearing 15 m. above the base of the trunk. Leaves bluntly acute; nearly parallel to each other, not lanceolate as in D. rospigliosii (Pilg.) DeLaub.; 9.5-11 mm. long by 2-3 mm. wide, green with glaucous stomata present. Female cone oval, wrinkled; base does not narrow as in D. rospigliosii; 2 cm. long by 0.8- 1.2 cm. wide, pecan-brown tinted red.

The Pires Decussocarp (Decussocarpus piresii Silba) differs its close relative the Rospiglios Decussocarp (Decussocarpus rospigliosii (Pilg.) De Laub.) in its leaves being nearly parallel, not lanceolate and its brown, oval cones which do not narrow at the base. Decussocarpus rospigliosii differs in its somewhat globose cones, which narrow at the base, it is distinctly glaucous and measures 2-3 cm. long. Its leaves are also larger, 11-12 mm. long by 2.5-5 mm. wide (Gray & Buchholz, 1948).

It is interesting to note that D.rospigliosii is a native of western Venezuela, eastern Columbia and central Peru at 1700-2600 m. altitude. Compared to D. piresii, it occurs at rather higher elevations (De Laubenfels to Pires, pers. comm., 1977).

A fossil species, Podocarpus araucoensis (Berry) Kungl. was described from the Chilean Eocene (Florin, 1940). Gaussen (1976) referred to this extinct species as being closely related to D. rospigliosii, however in leaf anatomy is appears more closely related to D. piresii (DeLaubenfels, pers. comm. 1983).

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of David J. DeLaubenfels in reviewing the taxonomy of the Podocarpaceae family with me during my visit to Syracuse University during July 11th & 12th, 1983.

Fig. 1. Decussocarpus piresii Silba, portion of the holotype, Rosa & Pires 586 (US).

Literature Cited

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